

CHAPTER XX

A WASTED DAY AT SUVLA

(Sketches 24, 25)

Sketch 2*. THE last chapter has shown how many causes combined to hinder the progress of the IX Corps throughout the 7th August. The misfortunes which attended the landing of the 34th Brigade, the imperfect knowledge of the plan which resulted from excessive secrecy, the inexperience of the troops, the delay in landing mules, the need of more guns, intense thirst—all these reasons must be taken into account. But the basic cause was the absence of resolute leadership, not only on shore but at corps headquarters and even at G.H.Q. Lack of leadership on the 7th August had jeopardized the whole plan.

8 Aug. And now on the 8th it brought the operations to ruin.

Following a quiet night, the morning of the 8th was absolutely still. Out of a cloudless sky the sun was shining fiercely. The enemy's guns were silent. Apart from an occasional rifle-shot on Kiretch Tepe there was not a sound of war. The sand-dunes near the Cut were crowded with resting troops. The shores of the bay were fringed with naked figures bathing. General Stopford and his chief staff officer were still on board the *Jonquil*, and had not yet been ashore.

Major-General Hammersley was early astir, and, realizing the importance of pushing forward to the hills, he set off at daybreak to visit his brigadiers. He found Sitwell still opposed to further action till his troops had had some rest. He then telephoned to Hill on Chocolate Hill, and learnt that he, too, was anxious to rest and reorganize before pressing on. Neither of these officers appears to have been alive to the practical certainty that at that moment Turkish columns, exalted by fanatical fervour and spurred by that most potent of all incentives—the defence of their own country—were pressing south from Bulair, and that if another day were wasted the IX Corps would be forestalled on the Tekke Tepe ridge.

No orders had yet come from the corps with regard to a

forward move, and neither General Stopford nor his senior staff officer had visited Hammersley since the operations began. In these circumstances General Hammersley's resolve evaporated. Accepting the plea that nothing could be done till his troops had had some rest, he returned to divisional headquarters.

On the way back to Lala Baba, however, the divisional commander decided that, purely as a defensive measure, Sitwell must be ordered to clear the beach or at least a portion of the large numbers of men who were congregated near the Cut, and to send some units forward to occupy the line of a cluster of shepherds' huts at Sulajik, about two miles inland. There they would form a connecting link between Chocolate Hill and the troops on Kiretch Tepe. An order to this effect was issued at 6.10 A.M. At the same time Colonel Malcolm, deeply conscious of the importance of gaining some at least of the surrounding hills, yet despairing of any definite order being issued by higher authority, sent out Captain J. F. S. D. Coleridge, of the divisional staff, to find out the dispositions of the division, and to impress upon subordinate commanders the importance of gaining the W Hills and the Anafarta spur. Coleridge was "to suggest to them" that if they didn't get this high ground quickly, the Turks probably would.

In Coleridge's instructions, however, no allusion was made to the vital importance of the Tekke Tepe ridge. Here it must be recalled that though the Commander-in-Chief had from the first insisted on the importance of gaining that ridge, and General Stopford had agreed that its capture "was essential to the safety of Suvla Bay", the IX Corps order issued before the landing had merely spoken of "denying" the ridge to the enemy, and the 11th Division's order had not referred to it at all. Now, on the 8th, this vital ridge was again escaping the notice of the 11th Division. It would seem, indeed, that no one at divisional headquarters yet realized its importance, the division's ultimate objective being still regarded as the W Hills and the Anafarta spur.

At 6.30 A.M. General Hammersley signalled to corps headquarters that all was quiet on his front. He did not yet know whether Green Hill as well as Chocolate Hill had been captured overnight. From Chocolate Hill northwards to Point 28 the Suvla plain was untenanted, but he was filling the gap with troops from the beach. This report contained no reference to the enemy.

About the same time General Malton reported from the northern flank that the situation on the Kiretch Tepe ridge was unchanged. All was quiet on his front, but the enemy's position

8 Aug. was "stronger than at first reported, and could not be taken "without the help of artillery".

Though General Stopford could not be aware of it, the opinion expressed in Mahon's morning message was not based on anything he had heard from Br.-General Nicol, who commanded the troops on the ridge. That officer, having been given no orders to advance beyond the position gained the previous day by the 11/Manchester, and knowing nothing of the general plan, had merely reported to divisional headquarters at daybreak that all was clear on his front and that he was now beginning to entrench a support line.

Hammersley's and Mahon's reports were the sum of the information at General Stopford's disposal as he paced the deck of the *Jonquil* on that bright summer morning and gazed at the tranquil shore. It had been explained to him before the operations began that a Turkish corps from Bulair might possibly reach the neighbourhood on the afternoon of the 8th. It might have been inferred from this information that probably only some eight to ten hours more were now available for the IX Corps to establish itself on the Tekke Tepe ridge, the possession of which alone, in his own words, could "guarantee the security "of Suvla Bay". General Stopford, however, had no hope of pushing on that morning. There had been great delay in landing "stores and supplies",¹ and till more of these were ashore his troops could not advance.

His first concern, therefore, on receiving General Mahon's report, was to protect his beaches on the northern arm of the bay from a sudden infantry assault. At 7.10 A.M. he signalled to Mahon:

The safety of the new landing place is all-important to the whole force. The best possible position from sea to sea [*i.e.* across the northern horn of the bay] to cover it in case of sudden attack must be selected and entrenched at once.

Despite the small amount of progress yet made by his troops, General Stopford sent a message to both his divisions at 9.30 A.M., congratulating them on their achievements. At ten o'clock, reporting Hammersley's situation to G.H.Q., he added, "I consider that Major-General Hammersley and the troops under "his command deserve great credit for the results obtained "against strenuous opposition and great difficulty". But there was still no question of advancing even as far as the hills, the possession of which was essential to the security of Suvla Bay. At 10.50 A.M., when informing G.H.Q. of Mahon's dispositions,

¹ See his 10.50 A.M. message below.

his message ended, "I must now consolidate the position held, 8 Aug. "and endeavour to land stores and supplies, which are badly "needed"

At General Headquarters at Imbros, after a second anxious night, the morning of the 8th August found the Commander-in-Chief increasingly concerned¹ by the absence of news from Stopford; and soon after daybreak he ordered Colonel Aspinall of his General Staff to hurry across to Suvla to report on the situation.

A destroyer had been placed at Sir Ian Hamilton's disposal for the operations, to enable him to reach any of the three fronts of attack with the minimum delay. Aspinall was to proceed in this destroyer; but on arrival alongside he was told that she was unable to proceed owing to boiler trouble. The only available vessel was a trawler, and she could not be ready till 9 A.M. Accompanied by Lieut.-Colonel Maurice Hankey,¹ he embarked on this vessel, but it was 9.30 A.M. before she started, and two hours later before she arrived at Suvla. Sir Ian Hamilton was thus robbed of an early report on the situation from one of his own staff.

Meanwhile at Suvla, having received General Hammersley's 6.10 A.M. order, Br.-General Sitwell had sent out an order at seven o'clock to the 31st and 32nd Brigades and the 5/Dorsetshire of his own brigade. "In order to secure the beach" a line was to be occupied from Chocolate Hill through Sulajik to connect with the 30th Brigade on Kiretch Tepe. This order contained no specific instructions for the 31st Brigade,² but the 32nd Brigade, at that time more or less concentrated near Hill 10, was told to occupy a line from Sulajik to a point 1,500 yards to the north, and the 5/Dorset, still at Point 28, to advance north-east on the right of the 30th Brigade, "who are advancing along "Kiretch Tepe ridge".³ Before moving off, Colonel Minogue, now in command of the 32nd Brigade, was verbally told by Sitwell that the troops were not intended to fight, but merely to take up a position and entrench.

Colonel Minogue had further been told that, owing to the heavy losses of the 6/Yorkshire, the divisional pioneer battalion

¹ Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence. He was visiting Gallipoli to make a report for the Cabinet.

² General Hammersley was still regarding Sitwell as in command of all the forward troops, and he, too, issued no definite order to Br.-General Hill on Chocolate Hill.

³ Br.-General Nicol had not been ordered to advance.

8 Aug. (6/East Yorkshire) would be attached to his brigade.¹ His own brigade orders² were issued at 8.15 A.M. and were somewhat difficult to execute. The 6/East Yorkshire on the right and the 9/West Yorkshire on the left, with the rest of the brigade in support, were to entrench a line running north for 1,500 yards from Sulajik. The East Yorkshire was told in addition, however, to connect up with the 31st Brigade on Chocolate Hill, a full mile south of Sulajik, and the West Yorkshire was to be in touch on its left with the Dorset, which was in turn to connect with the 30th Brigade on Kiretch Tepe. The time of starting would depend on the arrival of the East Yorkshire from Lala Baba. This battalion arrived at 9.15 A.M., and half an hour later, or 3½ hours after Hammersley had ordered a forward move, the advance of the brigade began.

Meanwhile on Chocolate Hill the situation was still peaceful. The 6/Lincolnshire and the 6/Border Regiment of the 33rd Brigade had been withdrawn from that neighbourhood, and were again in divisional reserve at Lala Baba. But Br.-General Hill, in addition to his own five battalions³ had been reinforced by the 7/S. Staffordshire. His own troops, by this time reorganized, were improving the defences of Chocolate Hill and Green Hill, and on receipt of Sitwell's order he had sent off the S. Staffordshire to occupy a low crest a little to the north-east.

Not a shot was fired by the enemy as the 32nd Brigade moved into the open plain. But the troops had had little chance of sleep for fifty-two hours,⁴ very little water since landing, and far too little food. Everyone had landed with two days' rations. But "bully-beef" is a wretched diet for a thirsty man when the temperature stands at over 90° in the shade, and the beach was littered with tins which the men had thrown away.

In point of fact, it is now known that not only the Suvla plain but the Tekke Tepe ridge, too, was bare of defenders throughout the 8th August, and Major Willmer had withdrawn all his artillery to avoid the risk of capture. It is also known that the three companies of Turks on Kiretch Tepe had not been reinforced. A general advance would soon have disclosed these facts. The Kiretch Tepe garrison, pressed in front and with its left flank turned, would have been bound to abandon

¹ Pioneer battalions, one of which was allotted to each division of the New Armies, were an innovation in the British service at that time. The 6/East Yorkshire had not been given any specific work on the beach, or on the construction of trenches or roads, and Hammersley was regarding it simply as an extra infantry battalion.

² Appendix 12.

³ One was carrying up ammunition and water from the beach.

⁴ A very cold night, following the intense heat of the day, had made sleep difficult, even for troops in reserve.

its position. Kavak Tepe and Tekké Tepe could have been had for the asking. Water in abundance would have been available on the Kiretch Tepe ridge and throughout the Suvla plain. 8 Aug.

But there was no intention of attacking that morning. General Hammersley had only ordered a very limited advance; General Sitwell had specifically told the 32nd Brigade that it was not expected to fight; and, owing to a chapter of accidents, even this small advance merely led to the disintegration of the one brigade of the IX Corps which at daybreak on the 8th had all its units intact.

Trouble began from the first. On the left, finding that Sitwell's information was inaccurate, and that the 30th Brigade was not advancing, Colonel Hannay, commanding the 5/Dorset, decided not to move. On the right, in accordance with the order to connect up with the troops on Chocolate Hill, the East Yorkshire bore away south-east of Sulajik till they reached the north-western slopes of Scimitar Hill. Up to this time no opposition had been encountered. On reaching the top of the hill, however, the leading troops came under fire from the direction of the W Hills; so about 11 A.M. they began to entrench a line below the crest. Two platoons of the West Yorkshire were in touch on the left, but the rest of that battalion was some way to the north. The 8/W. Riding was digging in near the Sulajik huts; and the 6/York & Lancaster was halted between Sulajik and Hill 10.

About 11 A.M. General Stopford heard from G.H.Q. that air patrols could discover no movement of Turkish troops in the plain east of Tekké Tepe. The G.H.Q. message ended: "Hope this indicates you will be able to gain a footing early on the Tekké Tepe ridge, importance of which you will realize". Stopford forwarded this information to his divisions, and now at last he ordered them to push forward, but only if the ground should prove to be lightly held:

It is of the greatest importance to forestall the enemy on the high ground north of Anafarta Sagir and on the spur running thence to Ismail Oglu Tepe. If you find the ground lightly held by the enemy push on. But in view of want of adequate artillery support I do not want you to attack an entrenched position held in strength.

Within the terms of this half-hearted order lies the root of the final failure of the Suvla operations.

To G.H.Q. General Stopford replied at noon:

Heavy fighting yesterday and unavoidable delay landing artillery make me consider it inadvisable to call on troops to attack a strongly entrenched position without adequate support.

8 Aug. Even before the receipt of this message the tenor of General Stopford's 10.30 A.M. report—that he was consolidating his position near the beach—had finally persuaded Sir Ian Hamilton that his personal intervention was vitally needed at Suvla if the Turks were to be forestalled. But his own destroyer was still disabled. At 11.30 A.M. he was told that she could not be ready till evening, and that there was no vessel available to take him across. The Commander-in-Chief was a prisoner at his own headquarters, and this was still his predicament when Stopford's *non possumus* message, despatched at noon, arrived about one o'clock. It was plain from this second message that General Stopford's imagination was still picturing lines of hostile trenches which certainly did not exist. It was plainer still that Sir Ian Hamilton must hurry to Suvla to insist on a resolute advance; and further appeals were now made to the local rear-admiral for any form of vessel that could make the passage. Eventually Sir Ian Hamilton was able to sail at 4.30 P.M. in the *Triad*, Admiral de Robeck's own ship, which had been ordered to Suvla. But vital hours had been lost, and it was after six o'clock before he entered the bay.

Meanwhile General Stopford's order of 11.30 A.M. had resulted in complete stagnation on both divisional fronts. On the left, General Mahon, already half convinced that he could not move without artillery, signalled to Br.-General Nicol forbidding an advance till "adequate artillery support" was available.¹ Soon after 3 P.M. a British aeroplane dropped a message at 10th Division headquarters to say that Turkish reinforcements were now approaching Turshun Keui, and that three guns were on the eastern slopes of Kavak Tepe. It must then have been plain to Mahon that there was not a moment to lose if the situation were to be saved. But by that time the 11/Manchester, which the corps had told him to keep for operations that day, had disappeared. Without notice to him, the battalion had acted on a direct order from Br.-General Sitwell to rejoin the 34th Brigade.² So only three battalions in all were available for action, and no artillery.

The situation from Mahon's point of view, believing as he

¹ He had been promised the support of the left flank destroyer and of one battery of mountain guns from Lala Baba. The arrangements with the destroyer fell through. The battery from Lala Baba did not arrive till next day, and it was subsequently discovered that, when passing the Cut, General Sitwell had claimed its services.

² When its disappearance was discovered and reported, orders were issued that the 9/Lancashire Fusiliers would be temporarily attached to General Mahon's command; but by a further mistake, instead of asking Mahon for orders, this battalion was sent by Sitwell to reinforce the 5/Dorset near Point 28.

did that he was already opposed by a strong force behind 8 Aug. entrenchments, was certainly difficult. With his artillery in Egypt and his infantry widely scattered, he was not a divisional commander except in name, and it can be no matter for surprise if he felt at that moment that neither he nor his division had been given a fair chance.

On the right General Hamraersley had repeated the corps' Sketch 25. injunctions to his brigadiers, and there, too, their effect was exactly what might have been expected. At 5.15 P.M. Colonel Minogue reported that, though no Turkish trenches could be seen, any attempt to advance was met by heavy fire. In these circumstances, "in compliance with orders received," he was not advancing.¹ Throughout the second day at Suvla, therefore, with 22 battalions ashore and only 1500 Turks opposed to them, the IX Corps had accomplished nothing.

The experiences of Lieut.-Colonel W. J. K. Rettie, in command of the LIX Brigade R.F.A., who arrived in Suvla Bay at daybreak on the 7th, make interesting reading. Throughout the 7th and the morning of the 8th he and his guns had remained on board the *Minneapolis*, and it was not until after midday on the 8th that lighters at last arrived to take them ashore.

"At last", Colonel Rettie wrote in his diary, "we were told we might start disembarking. . . . I was struck by the restfulness of all around. There appeared to be little going on, a good many infantry sitting about or having a bathe. The impression conveyed to my mind was that of a 'stand fast' at some field day. Having located the C.R.A. on the beach near Lala Baba, I was told to bring the batteries into action under cover of that hillock. This was rather a shock, as we had at least expected to go forward to Chocolate Hill. On expressing surprise, and asking what we were waiting for, I was met with the grim reply: 'for the Turks to reinforce'; and so it proved."

Later Colonel Rettie went forward to Chocolate Hill. He found the infantry brigadier sitting out in the open on the top of the hill, surrounded by various officers consulting maps. "There was no firing, beyond an occasional shot from a sniper somewhere, and the sensation of a pause in a field day still

¹ It would appear, however, that the East Yorkshire moved forward to the top of Scimitar Hill after nightfall. Their war diary reads: "The position was entrenched on the reverse slope during the day and farther forward during the night."

8 Aug. "prevailed. I was plied with queries as to how things were progressing on the beach, and when we were likely to get a move on; a question I could not answer."

When Colonels Aspinall and Hankey reached Suvla Bay from Imbros a little before noon on the 8th, they were convinced by the holiday appearance of the place that the hills had at last been captured. The whole bay was at peace, and its shores fringed with bathers. In high spirits Aspinall at once went ashore to find corps headquarters. The beach was crowded with resting troops; but no one could direct him to headquarters, so he started to walk inland. He had not gone far, however, when he met the C.R.E. of the 11th Division, who informed him that the leading troops were only a few hundred yards ahead, and that, though the Turks had apparently retired, there was still no sign of the division pressing forward: the corps commander was on board the *Jonquil*, and had not yet been ashore.

Aspinall was then directed to 11th Division headquarters, where General Hammersley explained¹ that he had received no orders to move forward, that his troops were dead beat and had suffered heavy casualties. They could not advance till they had had more rest, and till more guns had landed. He hoped to move forward again next morning.

In face of this information Aspinall hurried off to the *Jonquil* to see the corps commander. On his way to the beach, the C.R.A. of the 12th Division (Br.-General E. J. Granet) urged him "to get a move on". "Nothing is being done", said Granet, "and it looks as though nothing is going to be done."

Arriving on board the *Jonquil*, about three o'clock, Aspinall found General Stopford on deck. He was in excellent spirits, and at once came forward to greet the new arrival.

"Well, Aspinall", he said, "the men have done splendidly, and have been magnificent."

"But they haven't reached the hills, sir", said Aspinall.

"No", replied the general, "but they are ashore."

Aspinall urged that he was sure Sir Ian would be disappointed that the high ground had not yet been occupied, and he begged him to issue orders for an immediate advance before the enemy's troops from Bulair could forestall him.

¹ This account is taken from Colonel Aspinall's evidence before the Dardanelles Commission in 1917.

General Stopford replied that he fully realized the importance of losing no time, but that it was impossible to move till the men had rested and till more guns were ashore. He intended to order a fresh advance next day.

In despair Aspinall then went off to the flag-ship, where he found Admiral de Robeck and his Chief of Staff in equal distress at the inexplicable delay. With the admiral's permission, he now reported by wireless to G.H.Q.:

Just been ashore, where I found all quiet. No rifle fire, no artillery fire, and apparently no Turks. IX Corps resting. Feel confident that golden opportunities are being lost and look upon the situation as serious.¹

Meanwhile Aspinall's visit to the corps commander had had a greater effect than he himself realized. Earlier in the afternoon General Stopford had arranged to visit 11th Division headquarters at 5 P.M., and had signalled Hammersley to expect him at that hour. But as soon as Aspinall left him, about a quarter to four, he decided to go ashore at once to order an immediate advance, and he reached Hammersley's headquarters an hour earlier than expected. Hammersley was not in—without any prompting from the corps, he had gone off to arrange with Br.-General Maxwell for the 33rd Brigade

¹ Lieut.-Colonel Hankey described his experiences on the 8th August in a letter to the Prime Minister written four days later:

"A peaceful scene greeted us. Hardly any shells. No Turks. Very occasional musketry. Bathing parties round the shore. An entire absence of the expected bustle of a great disembarkation. There seemed to be no realization of the overwhelming necessity for a rapid offensive, or the tremendous issues depending on the next few hours. One staff officer told me how splendidly the troops were behaving, and showed me the position where they were entrenching. Another (straight from France this one) abused the policy of the Dardanelles operation. A third remarked sententiously that it was impossible to attack an entrenched position without a strong artillery, and this was not yet available. As an irresponsible critic I don't want to be hard, but I must confess I was filled with dismay, as was the G.S. man whom I accompanied. It was a delicate situation for the latter. His message to the C-in-C. had to be sent through the corps commander, and it was difficult for him to send an adequate message. He solved the difficulty by doing it through the Vice-Admiral, who was luckily in port. . . ."

Hankey stayed at Suvla till the 9th, and of that day he wrote:

"The staffs of the 10th Division and IX Corps were settling themselves in dug-outs. The pioneers, who should have been making rough roads for the advance of the artillery and supply wagons soon to be landed, were engaged on a great entrenchment from the head of the bay northward over the hills to the sea (to protect headquarters). It looked as though this accursed trench warfare in France had sunk so deep into our military system that all idea of the offensive had been killed. 'You seem to be making yourselves snug', I said to a Staff officer. 'We expect to be here a long time', was his reply."

8 Aug. to attack the W Hills next morning—but General Stopford saw Major Duncan and Captain Coleridge of the divisional staff, who gave him the latest news. Stopford told these officers that now the troops were watered and rested an immediate advance was imperative. Major Duncan explained, however, that the divisional commander was arranging to attack the W Hills next day, and Stopford thereupon approved, and agreed that the attack should begin at a time of Hammersley's own choosing.

On returning to the *Jonquil*, General Stopford found a message which the Commander-in-Chief had despatched before leaving Imbros:

All available information goes to prove that Turks are not at present entrenched on Ejelmer—Anafarta Ridge. But hardly likely this state of affairs will continue. Am sending two brigades 53rd Division to-night. Aeroplane just returned states old trenches in front of 11th Division not manned. Apparently only two battalions in their front with three field guns.

He thereupon issued the following order:

10th Division

11th Division

Reference information sent to you regarding the approach of enemy's reinforcements, the G.O.C. has decided to make a general advance with a view to seizing the high ground between Ejelmer Bay and Anafarta Sagir. The 11th Division will assault the line Ismail Oglu Tepe—Anafarta Sagir. The 10th Division will advance with a view to seizing the high ground south of Ejelmer Bay. The time of his advance will either precede or coincide with that selected by G.O.C. 11th Division. G.O.C. 11th Division will inform G.O.C. 10th Division as early as possible the time he decides to attack. G.O.'s C. divisions will communicate direct with Br.-General R.A. IX Corps, H.M.S. *Talbot*, regarding naval gunnery support.

It is hoped that one brigade 53rd Division will disembark to-night. If so, it is placed under the orders of the G.O.C. 11th Division for the above operation. Acknowledge.

From IX Corps, 5.30 P.M. 8th August.

It will be seen from this order that the corps commander intended the 11th Division (less two battalions attached to Mahon), with five battalions of the 10th Division, to be responsible only for the capture of the W Hills and the Anafarta spur as far as Anafarta Sagir. The leading brigade of the 53rd Division was also to be allotted to General Hammersley's command. The capture of the Kiretch Tepe ridge and the whole of the Tekke Tepe ridge from Ejelmer to Anafarta was allotted to General Mahon, who had only three

of his own battalions available and two battalions of the 11th Division. In point of fact, however, this subdivision of the corps task was actually fairer than can have been known at the time the order was written. General Mahon at that moment would have been opposed only by the one battalion of *Gallipoli Gendarmerie*, whereas the Anafarta spur and the W Hills had been chosen by Major Willmer as his main defensive position, and there he had established the greater part of his small available force.

On receipt of the corps order about 6 P.M. General Hammersley, who had meanwhile arranged for the 33rd Brigade to assault the W Hills at daybreak, began to draft a warning order for an advance by two brigades to capture his enlarged objective.¹ The 33rd Brigade, with one battalion of the 31st attached, would attack the W Hills and the southern half of the Anafarta spur; the 32nd Brigade would attack the northern half of the spur, including the village of Anafarta Sagir.

Sir Ian Hamilton arrived at Suvla Bay at 6 P.M., and after a hurried consultation with Admiral de Robeck in the flagship, he reached the *Jouquil* with Commodore Keyes and Colonel Aspinall about half past six. Stopford told him that all was going well. The troops needed more artillery and another night's rest before renewing the attack, but he intended to resume his advance next day at a time to be fixed by Hammersley. The Commander-in-Chief replied that next day might be too late. It was imperative that Tekke Tepe at least should be taken overnight. Could not Hammersley advance at once and do it?²

Stopford answered that the 11th Division did not consider a night advance feasible. Sir Ian Hamilton rejoined that in that case he must see Hammersley himself and would go ashore immediately: there was not a moment to lose. Stopford agreed, but asked that he might be excused from going too, as his knee was paining him after his earlier walk on shore that afternoon.

A moment later Sir Ian Hamilton had jumped into a picket

¹ Appendix 13 (i).

² Sir Ian Hamilton imagined at that time, and when he subsequently saw Hammersley, that the height of Tekke Tepe, on the southern half of the Tekke Tepe ridge, was included in the 11th Division's objective for the next day. Moreover, he regarded this frowning height as more important than the outlying W Hills and the Anafarta spur. It was the nearest height to the Turkish reinforcements from Bulair, and if the Turks occupied it overnight they would be able to enfilade an advance on the Anafarta spur next morning.

3 Aug. boat and was heading for Lala Baba. At the same time General Stopford was signalling to Hammersley:

6.45 P.M. Commander-in-Chief wishes you to commence advance at earliest possible moment, as vital to forestall the enemy, who is bringing up reinforcements. Do not wait for complete arrival of 53rd Division troops. Battalions will be landed as quickly as possible.

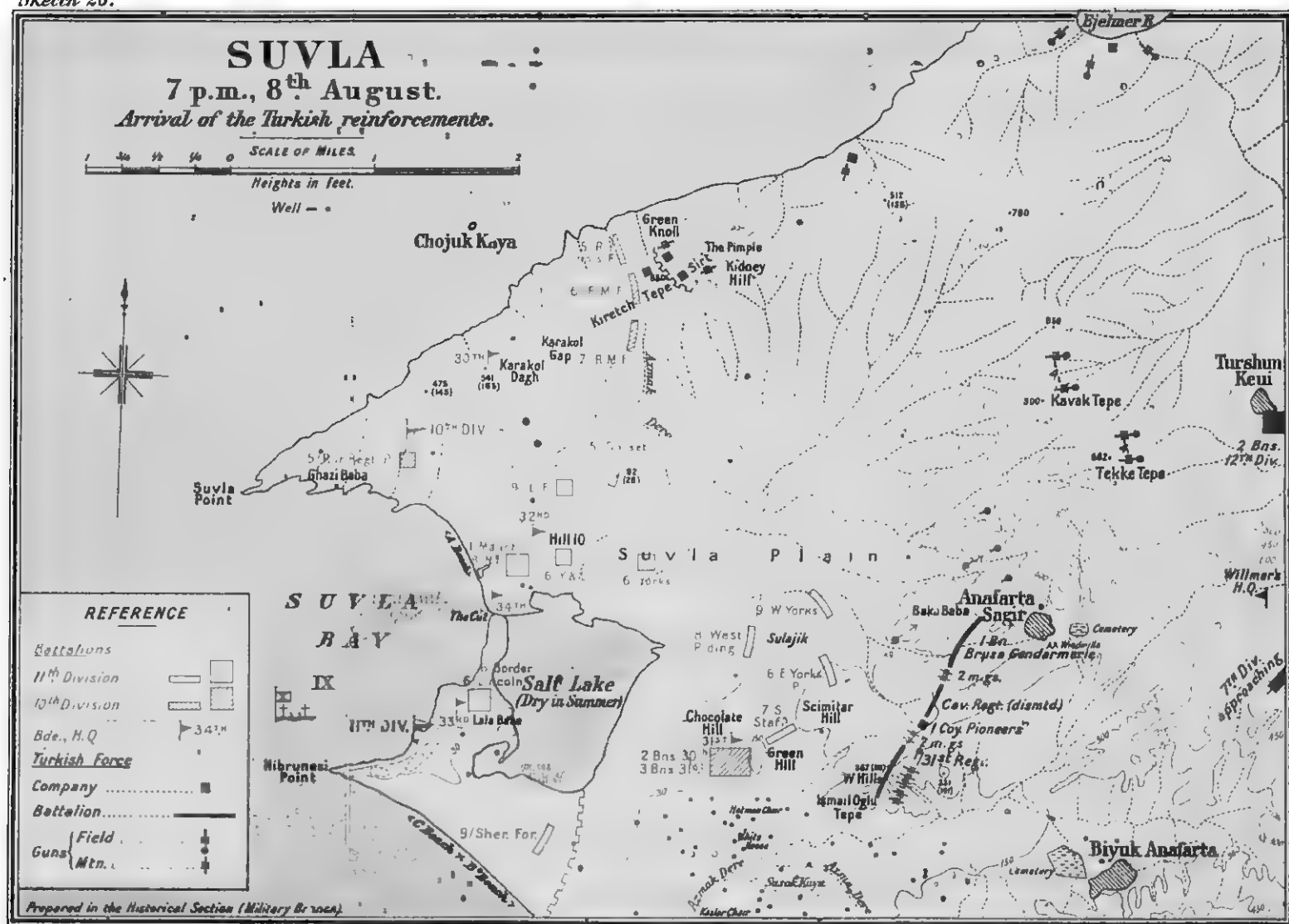
Hammersley, whose warning order to his brigades had just been issued, was reading this message when the Commander-in-Chief bounded up to his headquarters. To the Chief's demand for an immediate advance he replied that it would not be possible to warn the troops for an earlier move than eight o'clock next morning. But Hamilton was insistent. Tekke Tepe at least—he still thought that Tekke Tepe was included in Hammersley's objective—must be captured before daylight. Quite a small force, if used at once, would suffice for that part of the operation, but a whole division might well fail to-morrow. Surely, with 16 battalions under his command, there was some reserve which could be rushed forward to seize that vital ridge.

Hammersley still demurred. He did not think that anything could be done until daylight. All his units were scattered over a wide front, no reconnaissance had been made, the ground was difficult, the troops inexperienced. The hour was seven o'clock, and it would be almost impossible to get out orders in time for so delicate an operation.

Sir Ian Hamilton refused to be convinced by these arguments. Risks must be accepted and the bold course pursued. The need was urgent, the moment critical: the fate of the whole campaign probably depended on the events of the next few hours. Finally Hammersley suggested that the 32nd Brigade, which he believed to be more or less concentrated near Sulajik, might be fit to make the attempt. "Then order at least one battalion of it to be on top of the ridge by daylight", said Ian Hamilton quickly. "The presence of that one battalion on the high ground at daylight will be invaluable to the rest of the corps when they advance to-morrow morning."

This accordingly was decided upon, and Major Duncan was sent with verbal orders to 32nd Brigade headquarters on Hill 10. He was to tell the brigadier that the objective allotted to him half an hour ago had now been changed, and that his new objective was the high ground north of Anafarta Sagir to Kavak Tepe (on the Tekke Tepe ridge) inclusive. The brigade was not to wait till to-morrow, but to move forward during the

Sketch 25.



night, in order to ensure that at least one battalion should gain Tekke Tepe before daylight.¹ As an afterthought, Hammersley added: "Tell him to send the pioneers".²

Daylight was fading when Sir Ian Hamilton started back for de Robeck's flagship, and he now decided to stay at Suvla for the night, to watch developments. There were still nine hours before daybreak on the 9th, and he felt he could safely count on one selected battalion being able to cover in that time the 2½ miles from Sulajik to Tekke Tepe. But the night would be full of anxiety. Was it still possible to hope that the ridge could be reached in time to forestall the Turks?

Major Duncan reached 32nd Brigade headquarters almost as soon as the warning order issued at 7 P.M. Had the brigadier but known it, two of his battalions were at that moment well placed for an immediate advance on the Tekke Tepe ridge. The 9/West Yorkshire was a thousand yards to the east of Sulajik, and the 6/East Yorkshire at the northern end of Scimitar Hill. More important still, two East Yorkshire patrols had just returned to their line with encouraging news: apart from a little sniping from the direction of Anafarta Sagir, neither party had met with opposition. One patrol had been half-way up the Tekke Tepe ridge and reported that it was held only by a few groups of sentries. The other reported that a Turkish trench near Baka Baba had been evacuated, and that scattered parties of the enemy were retiring towards Anafarta Sagir.

But none of these facts was yet known to Colonel Minogue. So he sent out battalion runners with an order to all four battalions to concentrate at Sulajik at 10.30 P.M., when further orders would be issued.

This step was disastrous. The 8/West Riding, already at Sulajik, was joined there by the 6/York & Lancaster from near Hill 10. But the messengers for the East Yorkshire and West Yorkshire went astray in the thick scrub, and many hours were lost in waiting for these battalions to retire from their forward positions.

¹ A revised warning order [Appendix 13 (ii)] was sent out shortly afterwards to all brigades, and 33rd Brigade orders for the next morning's attack were issued at 10.15 P.M. The final order by the 11th Division (Appendix 14), including instructions for the artillery, engineers, and divisional reserve, was not issued till 11 P.M., but this delay in no way affected the fighting troops of the 32nd and 33rd Brigades.

It is noticeable that both in the warning order and final order issued by 11th Division the village of Anafarta Sagir itself was excluded from the objectives of the 32nd and 33rd Brigades. The village, which lies in a hollow, was apparently to be "pinched out." On the other hand, it will be shown later that in the 32nd Brigade order, Colonel Minogue directed his right flank upon Anafarta Sagir.

² Hammersley had special confidence in his pioneer battalion, and believed it to be fresher than any of the other units with the 32nd Brigade.

9 Aug. It was nearly 2 A.M. when the East Yorkshire began to arrive at Sulajik,¹ and then for the first time Colonel Minogue heard the news brought in by its evening patrols.²

There was still no sign of the West Yorkshire. For nearly two hours more Colonel Minogue waited; but at half past three—half an hour before dawn—he decided to wait no longer, and issued the order to advance.³ It was just two hours too late.

The march of the Turkish reinforcements from Bulair had taken at least twelve hours longer than Sir Ian Hamilton had dared to hope when he planned the Suvla landing; but at this very moment they were moving forward to attack, and their leading files had arrived on the crest of Tekke Tepe.

Thus by the hesitation and delay of the 7th and 8th August the advantages gained by the surprise landing at Suvla had all been thrown away. The IX Corps had trifled too long with time. The chance of gaining the high ground on very easy terms had disappeared. It was now to be a fight between forces of nearly equal numbers, with the British troops in the open sun-baked plain, and the Turks in possession of every point of vantage. The Turks, moreover, were definitely superior in skirmishing and in the use of their rifles to these young New Army troops straight out from England; and once surprise had gone there was little chance with anything approaching equal numbers of scoring a British success. The Suvla scheme, as planned by the Commander-in-Chief, was already doomed to failure.

8 Aug. How great were the opportunities lost at Suvla on the 8th August can best be seen by a study of German and Turkish records. All their accounts agree that this was a day of crisis for the Turks. "There can be no doubt", says Liman von Sanders, "that, in view of the great British superiority, "complete success would have been possible for them. . . .

¹ The runner had found the battalion at 11.30 P.M., but the men had not expected to move again that night, and it took two hours to get them under way. The runner to the 9/W. Yorkshire did not find the battalion till 5 A.M.

² A report had already been sent in by runner, but this man, too, had either lost his way or fallen to a Turkish bullet.

³ This order (Appendix 15) was extremely confused. It gave the brigade's objective as Anafarta Sagir (inclusive) to Kavak Tepe. It ordered the 8/W. Riding, supported by the 6/E. Yorkshire, to capture first Tekke Tepe, and then Kavak Tepe, but it allotted no troops to Anafarta Sagir and the high ground immediately north of that village. In a message despatched to the division 15 minutes later, the brigadier merely stated that he was advancing on Tekke Tepe and Kavak Tepe.

"We all had the feeling that the British leaders had delayed 8 Aug. "too long on the shore instead of advancing from the landing place at any cost."¹

At daybreak on the 8th Liman von Sanders had ridden out to the low hills to the south of Turshun Keui to watch the expected advance of his two divisions from Bulair. Here he found a single staff officer "selecting an outpost line", and learnt that the main columns were still strung out on the roads, and that no attack could be delivered till late in the afternoon.

The situation was black. Willmer's tired detachment could scarcely be trusted to withstand a determined assault. Messages from the Anzac front reported that Chunuk Bair had fallen, and that strong forces were advancing on Hill 971 (Koja Chemen Tepe). From the southern front at Krithia the news was equally disturbing. Wehib Pasha's Chief of Staff had personally urged that, in view of the imminent risk of the British in the northern zone reaching the Narrows and cutting his communications, the Achi Baba position should at once be abandoned and the Southern Group transferred to the Asiatic shore "while there is yet time".

But the Turks were fortunate in their commander. Liman von Sanders was not to be dismayed. To Wehib Pasha he telegraphed that not one foot of ground was to be surrendered voluntarily, and that his Chief of Staff was at once to be superseded. Willmer, who had now arrived to report that the British were showing little activity,² was ordered to hold the Anafarta spur at all costs. It was on this spur, which guarded the track from Suvla Bay to the Anafarta gap, that Liman von Sanders expected the weight of the British attack to fall, for he confidently believed that General Stopford's plan was to march *via* Biyuk Anafarta to capture the heights of Koja Chemen Tepe. Feizi Bey was told that it was absolutely imperative that his troops should counter-attack on a broad front between Kavak Tepe and Biyuk Anafarta not a moment later than sunset. At that hour, Liman considered, the gathering darkness would protect his attacking troops from the guns of the British fleet.

Feizi met his divisional commanders early in the afternoon to issue final instructions, and the proceedings at that interview

¹ "Fünf Jahre Türkei", pp. 114, 115.

² Willmer had reported in writing at 6 A.M. "1. Mestan Tepe was attacked by superior hostile forces and had to be evacuated on the night 7th/8th August. Ismail Oglu Tepe position occupied by 1/31st Regiment and Broussa Gendarmerie. Machine-gun detachment from the fleet has arrived and has been put into position. Kiretch Tepe is firmly in our hands. Losses of Broussa Gendarmerie yesterday about 30 per cent. 2. Very little activity in front."

8 Aug. were strangely similar to what was happening in the counsels of the IX Corps. The two divisional commanders deprecated an attack that evening. The ground, they urged, was difficult, and had not been reconnoitred. There was not enough artillery to neutralize the guns of the fleet, and the troops were tired and hungry. Half the units were still on the road, there were large numbers of stragglers, and far more time was needed to get out orders and deploy the force for attack. Feizi Bey was not proof against these arguments. His resolution wavered, and he agreed to postpone the attack till daylight on the 9th.

Meanwhile Major Willmer, whose troops were to advance on the left of the *12th Division*, had returned to his own front line after seeing the Commander-in-Chief. "Towards evening", he writes, "as no attack orders had arrived, I rode back to find out what was the matter. I heard that the attack was to be postponed. . . . As the Marshal had told me to keep him posted about current events, I informed him at once of this delay, for I was convinced that, in view of the whole situation, a postponement of the attack was wrong."

On receiving Willmer's report, Liman von Sanders, more ruthless than Sir Ian Hamilton, at once relieved Feizi Bey of his command, replacing him by Mustafa Kemal, the already famous commander of the Turkish *19th Division*.

Mustafa Kemal, who thus found himself in command of all the troops on the Suvla front, arrived at Feizi Bey's headquarters about 1 A.M. on the 9th. He had no fault to find with the orders already issued, and it was too late to advance the hour of attack. All he could do was to ensure that it should not be further postponed.

Shortly afterwards the Turkish *12th Division* began to move forward. Of the leading regiment (the *35th*), one battalion was to march on Kavak Tepe, and one on Tekke Tepe. The *36th Regiment*, following in rear, was to come up on the right, and the *34th* on the left.

The *7th Division*, as already described, was to march on Biyuk Anafarta and to carry out an attack to the south of Azmak Dere. This division, therefore, was not immediately opposed to the IX Corps, and, counting Willmer's detachment, the troops at last preparing to attack General Stopford's force amounted to some twelve battalions—perhaps a little more than 6,000 men—supported by 30 guns.



MUSTAFA KEMAL IN GALLIPOLI, 1915